



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Glacier Bay National Park
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Glacier Bay News Release

Effective date: 5AM August 20, 2004

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Date: August 20, 2004 (Amendment to News Release issued August 18, 2004)

DESIGNATION OF VESSEL SPEED LIMITS IN WEST ARM ENTRANCE, GLACIER BAY FOR WHALE PROTECTION

In Accordance with Title 36 Code of Federal Regulations
13.65 (b)(3)(iv)(C)

Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve Superintendent Tomie Patrick Lee has designated temporary speed restrictions for vessels traveling through the entrance of the West Arm of Glacier Bay to protect the numerous humpback whales that have been sighted in the area. There are record high numbers of whales and cow/calf pairs in Glacier Bay this summer. On August 18, park biologists observed 21 whales in the area of the entrance to the West Arm. The Park's vessel restrictions are intended to minimize the potential for disturbance and collisions with humpback whales, which are federally listed endangered species.

Until further notice, all vessels traveling through the entrance of the West Arm (see attached map) are restricted to a maximum speed limit of 13 knots through the water. Previous differences in speed restrictions based on vessel size are no longer valid, and are superseded by this restriction which covers all vessels.

Because the whales appear to be fairly dispersed throughout this area, there are no vessel course restrictions in effect in this area. However, all vessel operators are cautioned to keep a sharp lookout for whales which may be feeding anywhere within this range. The area requiring the temporary speed restrictions encompasses the entrance to the West Arm, Hugh Miller Inlet and mid-bay, and is defined by:

(cont'd)

- An imaginary line across the mouth of Geikie Inlet (connecting the points of land at the northern and southern edges of the mouth.);
- The existing whale waters boundary running from the northernmost point of the Marble Mountain peninsula (south entrance to Geikie Inlet) to the north tip of Drake Island;
- An imaginary line connecting the south tip of Drake Island to the north tip of Sturgess Island;
- An imaginary line connecting the north tip of Sturgess Island to Tlingit Point;
- An imaginary line following the point on shore west of the 1632 ft. elevation (shown on nautical chart #17318, Jan. 13, 2001 version, lat. 58 degrees, 47.00 minutes north, long 136 degrees, 19.56 minutes west) that runs west to the southern tip of the unnamed island southeast of Blue Mouse Cove.

Additionally, the 10 knot speed limit in Lower Bay Whale Waters has been increased to 20 knots for all vessels. While the lack of whales being observed in this area at this time does allow for an increase in the maximum speed limit, all boaters should be aware that this situation could change rapidly and that the limit may subsequently be lowered with short notice. Vessels must still remain at least 1 mile offshore, or run a mid-channel course when transiting through this area.

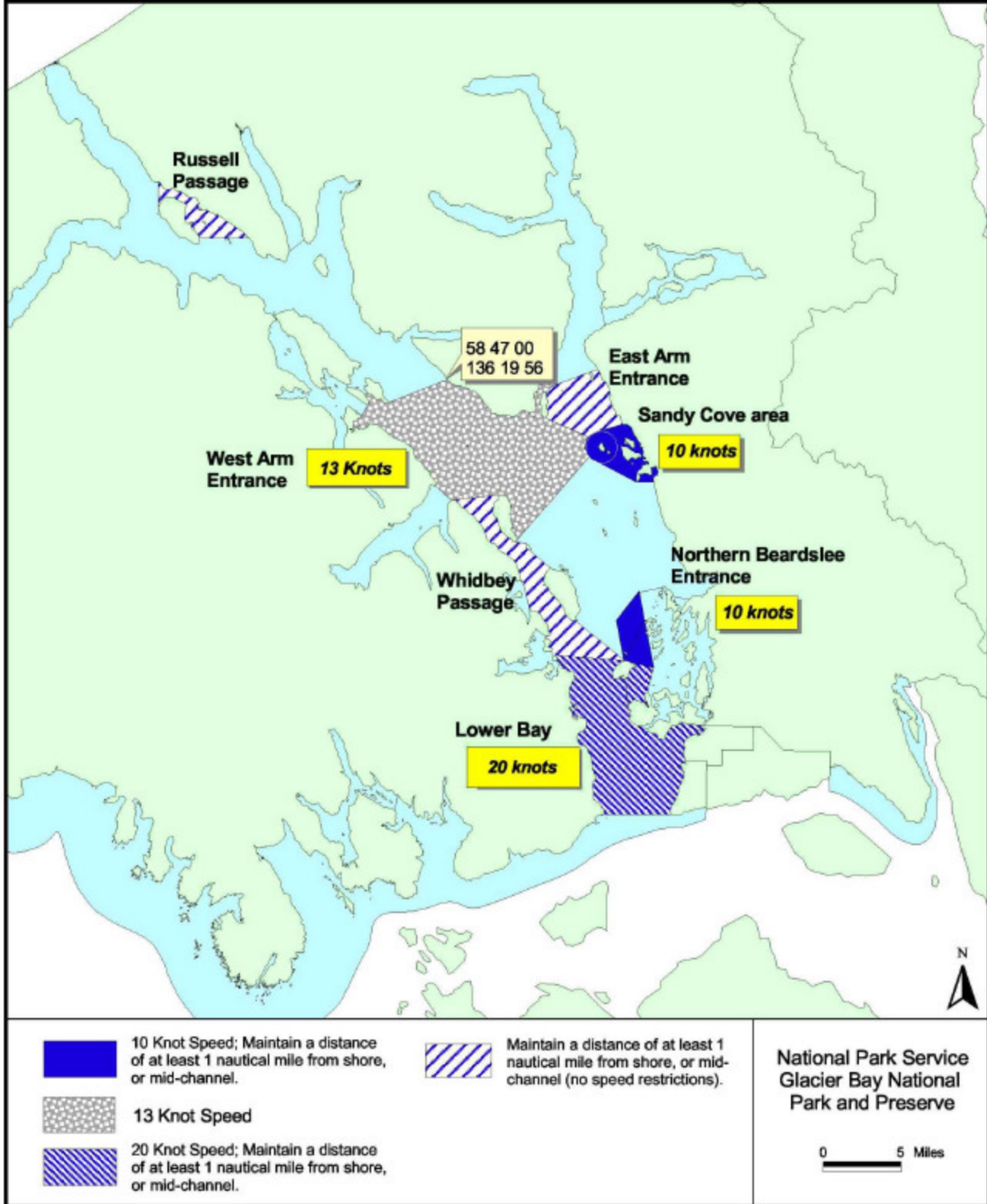
Elsewhere in Glacier Bay there are additional whale waters areas (see attached map) with 10 knot speed vessel speed and/or course restrictions already in place. Motorized vessels are required to follow these speed and course restrictions at all times, except when wind or sea conditions would make it unsafe to do so.

All boaters are advised to proceed cautiously in areas where whales are present because they may surface in unexpected locations, posing a hazard to both the vessel and the whale. Boaters are also reminded that vessels are always prohibited from approaching within one-quarter mile of humpback whales in Park waters. If accidentally positioned within one quarter mile of a whale, vessel operators must slow immediately to 10 knots or less and steer the vessel on a steady course away from the whale (perpendicular to the whale's course) until their vessel is at least one quarter mile from the whale. The humpback whale feeds on small schooling fish and krill in Alaska waters.

Boaters are advised to verify whale waters designations prior to entering Glacier Bay by telephoning (907)697-2627 or by contacting KWM20 Bartlett Cove on marine radio (VHF Ch. 16 or 12) Information, including a map of the restricted area and locations of August 18th whale sightings, is also available on the Park's web site at: <http://www.nps.gov/glba/pphtml/news.html>

Vessel Restrictions for Whale Protection

Effective August 20, 2004 until further notice



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